

Mr. Speaker, I have no further requests for time, and I yield back the balance of my time.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on the motion offered by the gentleman from New York (Mr. GILMAN) that the House suspend the rules and agree to the resolution, House Resolution 156, as amended.

The question was taken; and (two-thirds having voted in favor thereof) the rules were suspended and the resolution, as amended, was agreed to.

The title was amended so as to read: "Resolution commending the Reverend Jesse L. Jackson, Sr. on securing the release of Specialist Steven Gonzales of Huntsville, Texas, Staff Sergeant Andrew Ramirez of Los Angeles, California, and Staff Sergeant Christopher Stone of Smiths Creek, Michigan, from captivity in the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia."

A motion to reconsider was laid on the table.

"WE, THE PEOPLE, CITIZEN AND CONSTITUTION PROGRAM"

(Mr. HILL of Montana asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. HILL of Montana. Mr. Speaker, earlier this week more than 1,200 students from across the United States were here in Washington to compete in the national finals of the "We, the People, Citizen and Constitution Program."

I am proud to announce that a high school class from Polson High School in Polson, Montana, represented the State of Montana in this national event. These young scholars have worked diligently to reach the national finals and, through this experience, have gained a deep respect and a greater knowledge and a greater understanding of the fundamental principles and the values of our constitutional Republic.

"We, the People" is the most extensive education program in the country that was developed to educate young people about the Constitution and the Bill of Rights. This program has provided classroom materials at elementary and middle and high school levels for more than 26½ million students across the country.

I am proud of the students from Polson, Montana, and I commend them for their dedication to a better understanding of their Government.

Mr. Speaker, I include the following newspaper article for the RECORD:

NONTENURED TEACHERS CUT: BOARD VOTES TO SLICE 60 POSITIONS TO HELP SAVE \$1M

(By Leslie McCartney)

The teaching contracts of more than 60 nontenured teachers will not be renewed, Helena School District trustees reluctantly voted Tuesday night.

The district is facing serious financial problems. The district is seeking ways to slice \$1 million expenses from its 1999-2000 school year budget.

"This is an unpleasant task," said Bill Rasor, personnel program manager for the district.

Many of the trustees lamented the necessary move—by contract the district must give teachers notice—but it was not unexpected.

Tuesday's meeting included more proposed considerations for reductions as part of the ongoing budgeting process that has been consuming the district and the trustees for at least a month.

A new consideration presented to the board Tuesday included eliminating a \$15,000 contract for high school students with the Montana Science Institute, based at Canyon Ferry Lake.

Also discussed were a few revised proposals, including that of the gifted and talented program. The program would not be completely eliminated as was suggested earlier this month.

Under a new model, the district would retain two gifted and talented staff members to coordinate services and consult with classroom teachers.

"We're regrouping . . . maybe we're not quite ready to hand it off entirely," Superintendent Bruce Messinger noted.

Also revised was the issue of increasing class size, which of district hoped to boost to save money. Under a new proposal, class sizes in the early primary grades (kindergarten through second grade) (kindergarten through second grade) would stay small.

However, class sizes would be raised to 26 students in third grade, 28 in fourth grade and 30 in fifth grade. The changes in staffing, coupled with savings in physical education and the music program, could save \$116,000, according to district projections.

Trustees also mulled a revision in the "significant writing" program to cut four full-time positions at a savings of \$116,000.

This year's budget crunch is not an anomaly. Messinger presented a glimpse of a budget picture for the next four years that points to a further decline in enrollment. Enrollment in Montana is directly linked to the amount of funding a district receives.

"It's not going to get any prettier," said trustee Brenda Nordlund.

Many trustees also had strong words for the Legislature, which they accused of not paying attention to the plight of many of the state's larger districts that are unable to legally raise additional funds.

"We're pushing hard against the ceiling and it's coming down on us," Messinger noted.

The district's difficulties—along with the hours spent poring over numbers and finances—brought at least one trustee to near tears at the board meeting.

"I find this a tremendously humbling experience," said trustee Julie Mitchell.

She added that she realizes the district must pare its expenses, but the task is unpleasant and unavoidable.

"In the end we have to decide and someone's going to be mad," she said.

But she admonished both the public and trustees to remember that the district delivers a quality education and will continue to do so, in spite of the financial crunch.

"There are some incredibly cool things going on . . . we give our kids a fantastic education."

Trustees also reminded the public that none of the proposed reductions have been decided and urged continued public input.

"This is not set in concrete," Trustee Rich Moy said.

A public hearing on the budget is set for March 16.

SPECIAL ORDERS

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under the Speaker's announced policy of Jan-

uary 6, 1999, and under a previous order of the House, the following Members will be recognized for 5 minutes each.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Illinois (Mr. LIPINSKI) is recognized for 5 minutes.

(Mr. LIPINSKI addressed the House. His remarks will appear hereafter in the Extensions of Remarks.)

ORDER OF BUSINESS

Mr. THUNE. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that time allocated to the gentleman from Indiana (Mr. BURTON) and the time allocated to me be reversed on the schedule.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Is there objection to the request of the gentleman from South Dakota?

There was no objection.

IDEA FUNDING

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from South Dakota (Mr. THUNE) is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. THUNE. Mr. Speaker, today the House passed House Concurrent Resolution 84, which I think is important for a number of reasons. There is no higher priority, I believe, than our children's education.

I have a third grader and a fifth grader who attend Oscar Howell Elementary, the public school system in Sioux Falls, South Dakota, in the Sioux Falls School District. The school board election is coming up in June. There are no fewer than 12 people running for one position on the school board, and we will have the opportunity to choose a very qualified member of the school board. I am delighted to have that many people who are interested in seeking and holding that very important position.

The concurrent resolution that we passed today in the House was a non-binding resolution. But, nevertheless, I think is important, for several reasons. It compels the will of this House that special education be funded before any other new education initiatives are funded. That makes basic sense. The special education mandate, IDEA funding, is a Federal mandate and, therefore, should be federally funded.

Twenty years ago the Congress committed to fund special ed at 40 percent of the total funding level. We are not even close to that today, not even close. I am pleased that the Republican Congress in the last years has begun moving in that direction. In fact, we have backed up our rhetoric with our action.

If we look at where the President's budget has been in the last several budget years, in fiscal year 1997 the Republican Congress upped the President's request for IDEA funding for special ed by 19 percent. In 1998 we increased the funding level for special ed